

Kids Intervention with Kids in School

Brief Program Description

Kids Intervention with Kids in School (KIKS), is a school-based youth development and primary prevention program for children in grades 6 –12. The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey (CHS), a private, not-for-profit, statewide agency that has been providing comprehensive clinical and social services for children, youth, and families since 1894, administers KIKS. The underlying goal of the KIKS program is to help pre-adolescent and young adolescent students avoid self-destructive behaviors and cope in positive ways with personal and social problems they encounter in their everyday lives. KIKS also helps high school-age youth acquire a solid background of skills, attitudes, and behaviors that will enable them to become successful, productive adults.

KIKS was designed so that children would have the opportunity to meet (during the school day) to “learn about/discuss/wrestle with/question” those issues that cause them the most personal and group challenge. The major difference between this and other school self-help programs is the use of peer-leaders, or those students, slightly older, who had made the conscious decision to enact the principles of KIKS by becoming group leaders and role models for their younger fellow students.

Program Strategies

The KIKS program has five major components. These include youth development groups, after-school activities, tutorial program, parent involvement, and summer peer leader training. Children in grades 6 – 8 meet weekly in groups of up to 15, led by teenage peer leaders from grades 8 – 12 who are supervised by adult group workers. The teen and adult leaders use experiential activities to motivate the younger children to adopt, and value, self-preserving behaviors and to stay in school and learn. They participate in group discussions, role-playing, and other hands-on activities to learn and practice how best to cope with problems at home, in school, or in their social interactions with peers.

Population Focus

Participants were children in grades 6-12.

Suitable Settings

The program operates in schools during the regular school day with additional after-school activities.

Required Resources

The KIKS Program Training Manual is required.

Implementation Timeline

Children meet weekly during the school year.

Outcomes

Participants and observers say that KIKS:

- gives children the opportunity to meet and talk informally in small groups about what concerns them most;
- draws out shy, retiring youngsters, some of whom never talk in class;
- helps students developmentally and socially;
- reinforces what children learn in health class;
- lays the groundwork for children to change how they look at problems;
- helps improve the climate in schools;
- prepares them for high school;
- helps students and faculty cope in crises like the death of teachers and racial unrest;
- deals with the whole child, and is versatile and adaptable to new situations;
- promotes multicultural and multiracial cooperation and understanding;
- teaches children to be courteous and disciplined in group or interpersonal relationships;
- promotes nonviolent conflict resolution;
- decreases and delays inappropriate sexual behaviors;
- decreases and delays drug and alcohol use;
- decreases and delays smoking.

Contact Information

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

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